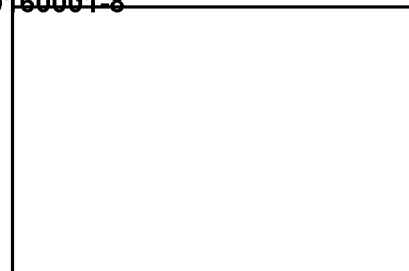




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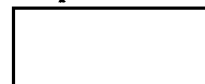


National Intelligence Daily

Tuesday
20 February 1979

State Dept. review completed

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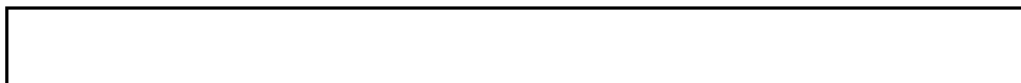
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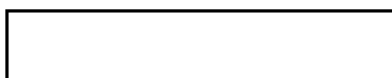
Special Analyses



Oman: <i>Seeking Defense Commitment</i>	14
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The Overnight Reports, printed on yellow paper as the final section of the Daily, will often contain materials that update the Situation Reports and Briefs and Comments.

Severe weather in the Washington area has curtailed the size of the staffs producing this edition of the Daily. As a consequence, no graphics are included today.



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[REDACTED]

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OMAN: Seeking Defense Commitment

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[REDACTED]

Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Zawawi is in Washington seeking some kind of defense commitment from the US. Oman has lost Iranian military support, which was crucial in the mid-1970s in beating back an insurgent movement supported by the Marxist regime in neighboring South Yemen.

[REDACTED]

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Sultan Qabus, the country's strongly pro-Western and anti-Communist monarch, believes Soviet activities in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, and particularly South Yemen are evidence of a Soviet intention to encircle the Arabian Peninsula and ultimately replace pro-Western governments in the area with ones more friendly to the USSR. Qabus fears that the loss of Iran's protective umbrella, symbolized by the impending recall of 300 Iranian soldiers from Oman, may encourage South Yemen, with Soviet backing, to revive the insurgency.

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The Insurgent Threat

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[REDACTED]

The Popular Front, a Marxist revolutionary organization backed by South Yemen and the USSR, started the insurgency in Oman's Dhofar Province in the mid-1960s. Qabus put down the rebellion in 1975 with the aid of Iranian combat troops, British contract officers, and Jordanian support. The insurgents fled to South Yemen and have been training cadre there since 1975. A renewal of low-level guerrilla activity in Dhofar is possible by late this year.

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[REDACTED]


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The Popular Front lacks sufficient forces at the moment to be more than a minor irritant to Oman. While substantially increased Soviet support to these forces could challenge Oman's security, the Soviets do not now seem to favor an aggressive policy toward Oman. They are trying to project a nonthreatening image in the area to offset the impact of their recent gains in South Yemen and Afghanistan. 


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Even without Soviet support, South Yemen could pose a significant challenge to Oman if it succeeds in its efforts to replace the present regime in North Yemen. Reduced tensions with North Yemen would permit South Yemen to devote more attention and efforts to Oman. 

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Oman will continue to line up support for its defense and will expand development programs while beefing up its military. If Oman acquires sufficient financial and military aid, it will be reasonably well-prepared to withstand subversion. 

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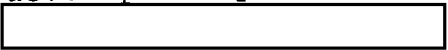


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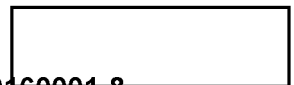
The Domestic Mood

The Omanis seem relatively content with Qabus, and his rule appears stable. Qabus, who ousted his father in 1970, has made some progress in modernizing one of the most backward states in the world. Much of Oman's oil revenue has been used for highly visible development programs, particularly in Dhofar Province. 

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Qabus has tried to replace British and Arab advisers with qualified Omanis and has made progress in the "Omanization" of the armed forces. He remains, however, an absolute monarch, ruling without cabinet or assembly, surrounded by foreign advisers  Short-term prospects for Qabus are good, but in the long term he will have to learn to share his power with growing numbers of educated youth. He also will face declining revenues as oil production falls, thus slowing development plans unless he can find foreign financing. 

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[REDACTED] 25X1

OVERNIGHT REPORTS

(The items in the Overnight Reports section have not been coordinated within the intelligence community. They are prepared overnight by the Office of Current Operations with analyst comment where possible from the production offices of NFAC.)

Iran

[REDACTED] Prime Minister Bazargan has announced that the "Khomeini Committee" would wind up its activities within the next two weeks. Bazargan also said that all political parties, including the Communists, would be legalized provided they act in a peaceful manner. The Prime Minister reiterated that a referendum on an Islamic republic will be held and that a constituent assembly will be elected. He denied that Iranians were responsible for the attack on the US Embassy last week and predicted that Iran would resume substantial exports of oil soon. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] 25X1

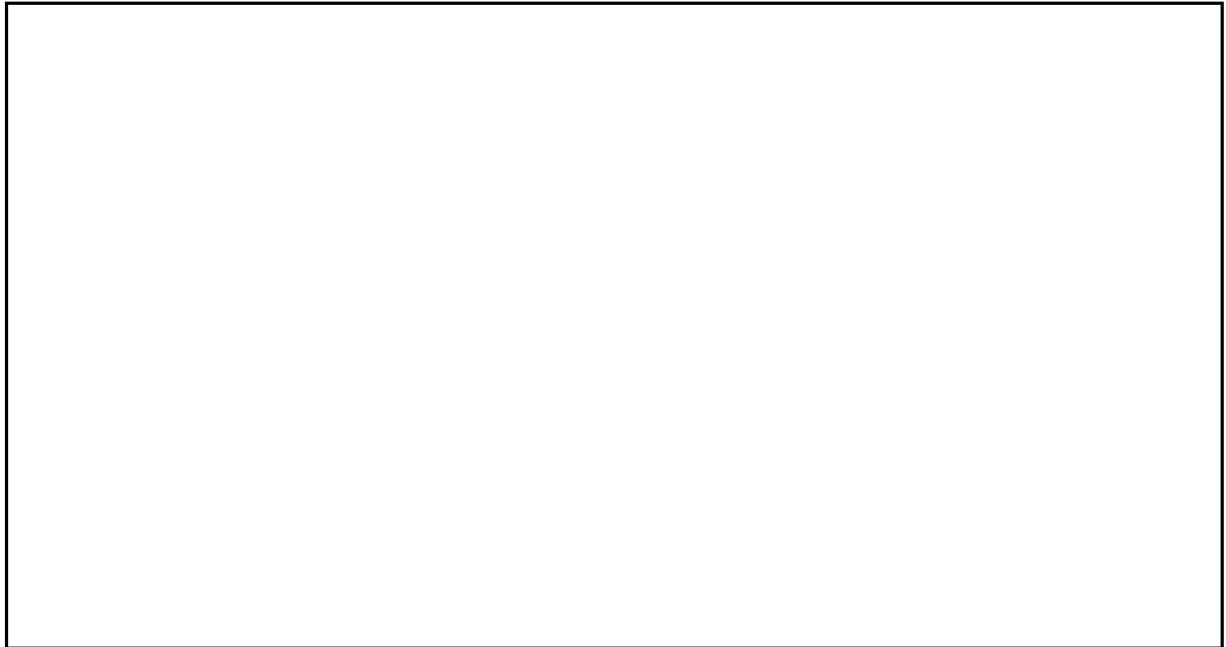
According to Western news services, four more generals were executed this morning. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] 25X1

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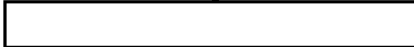


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Bangladesh

According to Dacca radio, unofficial returns from Bangladesh's parliamentary election held Sunday indicate that candidates from President Ziaur Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party won more than two-thirds of the 300 seats. The leftist faction of the Awami League--which ruled Bangladesh prior to the 1975 coups that brought Zia to power--will become the major opposition party with about 40 seats. The landslide for the President's party repeats Zia's overwhelming victory in the presidential election last June. 

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COMMENT: *The majority will allow Zia to choose his cabinet and programs virtually without compromise. It will also permit him to amend the constitution, perhaps to make the presidency--already independent of parliament--still more powerful. Although the election probably was relatively fair, the disgruntled Awami League could well take to the streets and charge that Zia's government rigged the vote.* 

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